

Coins

Gaps in dating loom large for '75

By Roger Boye

THE NEW YEAR will gain numismatic distinction for what probably will not happen during its 365 days: It appears likely that no quarter, half-dollar, or dollar coins will be minted with a 1975 date.

This unusual action would create a "gap" in the consecutive dating of quarters for the first time since 1933, and in half-dollars for the first time since 1932.

The Treasury Department has authority—and it will likely use this authority—to mint quarters, half-dollars, and dollar coins with a 1974 date during the first six months of 1975. During this same time period, the department also will make coins in those three denomi-

nations with the new bicentennial reverse designs.

The bicentennial coins should be released into circulation beginning next July 4 and will carry the double date 1776-1976. The bicentennial reverse designs will be used on the three coins at least thru 1976.

The Mint has produced quarters carrying the date of every year this century except 1922, 1931, 1933, and, as it now appears, 1975. Regular series half-dollars exist for every year this century except 1922, 1924 thru 1926, 1930 thru 1932, and, it seems, 1975.

The Treasury likely will continue to mint 1974-dated quarters, half-dollars, and dollar coins into 1975 [rather than mint 1975-dated coins] because it fears a possible

coin shortage if the 1975-dated coins were made.

The Mint might not be able to make 1975-dated quarters, for example, in great enough quantity to satisfy collector [and hoarder] demand. Thus, 1975 quarters might be snatched out of circulation along with the bicentennial quarters later in 1975, so the thinking goes, creating a shortage of quarters. Quarters dated 1974 are already plentiful, so by minting them the chance of a coin shortage is diminished.

Cents, nickels, and dimes will be minted during the entire calendar year 1975 with the 1975 date. There is no new bicentennial design for coins of those three denominations.

Incidentally, the Mint is

taking orders for nonsilver bicentennial coin proof sets beginning Thursday. A set of six coins will cost \$7.

On Nov. 15 the Mint began taking orders for a three-piece bicentennial proof set and uncirculated set of coins containing 40 per cent silver. This new order period, beginning Thursday, is for sets containing a 1975 dated cent, nickel, and dime, and the three bicentennial coins [dated 1776-1976] of the usual copper-clad composition containing no silver.

The bicentennial coins containing 40 per cent silver will be made for collectors. Only nonsilver, copper-clad bicentennial coins will be placed in circulation.

To order, write Bureau of the Mint, 55 Mint St., San Francisco, Cal. 94175.